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CUBAN INTERVENTION.

Any man, whether a member of Congress or otherwise, who would attempt to make a dollar out of such a crisis is too mean to live. Men who attempt to speculate on the calamities of the poor Cubans or on the blowing up of the *Maine* ought to be shot.

SPEECH

OF

HON. SHELBY M. CULLOM,

OF ILLINOIS,

IN THE

SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,

Friday, April 15, 1898.

WASHINGTON.

1898.

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Mr. W. A. Smith

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S P E E C H
OF
HON. SHELBY M. CULLOM.

The Senate having under consideration the joint resolution (S. R. 149) for the recognition of the independence of the people of Cuba, demanding that the Government of Spain relinquish its authority and government in the Island of Cuba, and to withdraw its land and naval forces from Cuba and Cuban waters, and directing the President of the United States to use the land and naval forces of the United States to carry these resolutions into effect—

Mr. CULLOM said:

Mr. PRESIDENT: On yesterday evening I had the honor of obtaining the floor for the purpose of making some remarks upon the resolution before the Senate and upon the subject under consideration generally. I stated then, before an adjournment was taken, that on the 10th day of December, 1896, I had the honor of addressing the Senate on the joint resolution (S. R. 168) introduced by me at that time, declaring the extinction of Spanish title and the termination of Spanish control of the islands at the gateway of the Gulf of Mexico.

On that occasion, referring to the condition of affairs then existing in Cuba, I called attention to the magnitude of the problems which even in that early day of the struggle of the Cuban patriots for independence had grown out of that condition. Those problems I then took opportunity to observe would demand solution in the early future, and I ventured the assertion that the determination of the policy to be pursued in the solution of those problems would result in the independence of Cuba and lead to the conclusion that a people with such a history and such an education as the Spanish people have must be expelled from all participation in the control of any territorial possessions on this hemisphere.

Since that time the deplorable condition of affairs in Cuba has become more and more intensified, and the necessity for action by this Government, upon the lines of policy which at that time

were indicated by me, has become more and more apparent, until now the hour for action is about to strike.

Step by step Spain has been pushed back from dominion in the New World, as she was crowded from control in Europe. Now she is to lose another of her possessions. Her oppressed subjects in Cuba are about to become the arbiters of their own destiny. This result is inevitable; for, as has been aptly remarked by some one:

Some incurable vice in her organization, or it may be in the temperament of her people, neutralizes all the advantages Spain ought to derive from her stubborn hardihood, her nearly perfect capacity for endurance, and the somber genius alike for war, for art, and for literature which have so often marked her sons. No race outside her own borders, even if Spanish by origin, has ever been able to endure her reign, and every race which has resisted has ultimately succeeded in withdrawing itself from her control.

If permitted to pursue her pitiless course in Cuba, she would go on without remorse, and, if she could, she would exterminate the million and a half of patriots who deprecate her tyrannical policies and her cruel and bloody methods in peace as well as in war. Her ruthlessness is apparent in the conditions now existing in Cuba as related by four eyewitnesses who are members of this Senate.

The story as told by the honorable Senator from Vermont [Mr. PROCTOR] has challenged the attention of the whole civilized world. That narrative shows that at our very door the cruelty of Spain is blackening the history of the time with deeds that cry aloud to heaven for vengeance. With a careful pen the honorable Senator wrote his tale of woe. He gave to it no coloring that truth did not absolutely require him to use. He did not allow his emotions to lead him into any expression of anger. He compelled himself to relate the harrowing facts which had come under his observation without using any of the forms of indignant speech which were doubtless suggested to his mind.

He told the story of Cuban suffering fully, it is true, but with a gentleness of expression that, under the circumstances, was wonderful, and in almost any other man than the judicial-minded Senator from Vermont would have been impossible. But this story of suffering and outrage, thus mitigated in the telling, has aroused the indignation of America and stirred the conscience of the world.

This distressful story was corroborated by the distinguished Senators from New Hampshire, Nebraska, and Mississippi, all of whom have visited the island and have borne testimony in this Chamber to the cruelty of Spanish warfare in Cuba in a most eloquent and forcible manner, giving the story over again of the horrible condition of the suffering and death of the reconcentrados.

In addition to the statements of these distinguished gentlemen, General Lee, in his testimony before the Committee on Foreign Relations since his arrival, says that he regards the condition of the reconcentrados as being just as bad as it has ever been; that great suffering still exists and will continue to exist until they are relieved by the hand of charity from this or some country other than Spain, and that very little of the reported appropriation by Spain of \$300,000 for the sustenance of the reconcentrados will be spent for the relief of the suffering people there.

That there is any extremity to which Spain would not go in an attempt to wreak her desire for vengeance upon the United States I do not believe. The officials, in the exercise of authority conferred by her, have robbed, imprisoned, and even murdered citizens of this Republic. Our flag has been insulted repeatedly on her soil, and while in the discharge of their duties representatives of this Government have been threatened with violence. And, worse still, one of our battle ships, while on a friendly call at Havana, was destroyed by the explosion of a mine and 263 of her crew murdered in cold blood.

These heroes were not permitted to die in battle striking blows in the service of their country. They were assailed by Spanish treachery working in darkness. But, although they were not permitted to die in the hurly-burly of battle, while exalted into patriotic fervor by the excitement of war, they will never be forgotten by their grateful countrymen. In no part of the land or sea are they unknown.

Sir, this tragedy has aroused a spirit of resentment throughout the length and breadth of the Republic, and the patriotic people of all sections of the country are demanding that the President and the Congress shall resent the assault upon the *Maine* as an act of war by Spain, and that the resenting blow shall be struck without unnecessary delay.

Sir, there seems to be good reason for this demand. All the evidence goes to show that the *Maine* was destroyed by an outside force; that whatever the destroying agency was, it was placed in position in the harbor by the officials of the Spanish Government; that the officials of the Spanish Government, whose duty it was to know of the existence and location of the destroying agency, conducted the vessel to its anchorage, and that only officials of Spain could have used or have permitted others to use the means by which the destroying agency was utilized for the purpose for which it was intended.

The testimony of Captain Sigsbee, commander of the *Maine*, shows that every precaution had been taken to prevent accidents; that every portion of the ship had been inspected, including the magazines, coal bunkers, etc., and that he felt sure that the ship was blown up by an outside force.

Ensign Powelson, who was present on the wreck of the *Maine* every day while the divers were making their investigations, speaking of the important discoveries made by them during his presence, testifies that the bow of the vessel where the explosion occurred was pushed up and that diver Morgan, while walking on the bottom, fell into a hole on the port side and reported that everything in the vicinity of this hole seemed bent upward. The plates were found split, forming a V, pushed over and bent down over the 10-inch magazine. He further says that diver Smith worked himself forward and down to the keel on the bottom plating, at the point where the keel went into the mud, at which point he found a hole in the mud about 6 feet deep and 15 feet in diameter.

General Lee, in his testimony before the Committee on Foreign Relations, stated that he was satisfied that the explosion causing the destruction of the *Maine* came from a force from outside of the ship. He also states that the man who did the work of destroying the *Maine* must have been an officer thoroughly acquainted with explosives of all sorts, and one who knew all about the manner of producing the explosion.

He further states, as was stated here on the floor by the Senator from Maine [Mr. FRYE], that upon the night of the disaster the Spaniards were rejoicing among themselves, drinking cham-

pagne in honor of the event, and in many portions of the city were making merry on account of the destruction of the *Maine*, its officers and crew.

From all this and much more that can be stated of the evidence taken by the naval board and by the Committee on Foreign Relations there seems to be no way by which Spain can escape responsibility for the destruction of the battle ship or by which we can overlook the force of the suggestion that the destruction of the vessel, under the circumstances stated, was in fact effected by the treachery and work of Spanish officials.

If the assertion is made that war can not be justified by circumstantial evidence that the nation upon which war is to be made has been guilty of an offense which she denies, viz, the destruction of the *Maine*, and that only in the extremest of cases could we be justified in acting on the principle of international law that a state may interfere in a hostile manner in the affairs of another state guilty of a wrong against humanity or liberty, we would be justified, nevertheless, in interference with the action of Spain in Cuba in the interests of commerce and the repose of our own society.

Long ago, indeed, acting outside of every consideration of sympathy for the Cuban patriots, acting wholly in our own interests, we should have in some way avoided the necessity under which we have acted, of being in effect an ally of Spain in her efforts to suppress a people who are so gallantly struggling for freedom.

But, sir, whatever may have been our sins of omission against liberty in the armed controversy in progress between Spain and Cuba, we propose now to do our duty to God and humanity, liberty, and to ourselves by saying to Spain: "Hold your hand! You shall not outrage liberty and humanity in Cuba any longer. You must withdraw your army and abdicate your authority."

This we must say now, and if Spain shall see proper to resent our action we shall not hesitate to take up the gauntlet and appeal to the God of battles and to the judgment of mankind to justify us in our course.

Mr. President, it is said that Spain will appeal to other monarchical governments to aid her in her struggle with the United States, and that she will base her appeal for assistance upon the

ground that our interference in her attempt to suppress insurrection is a violation of the doctrine asserted by the allied powers of Europe in 1821, when Greece was struggling for her independence, namely:

That useful and necessary changes in legislation and administration ought only to emanate from the free will and intelligent conviction of those whom God has rendered responsible for power. All that deviates from this line necessarily leads to disorder, commotions, and evils far more insufferable than those which they pretend to remedy.

This is the doctrine of the divine right of kings, and if it were asserted by a world in arms, America would be compelled to resist it to the bitter end and set up in opposition to it the divine right of the people to govern themselves. In the language of Webster, speaking in the Senate of the United States seventy-five years ago:

That the people hold their fundamental privileges from the sovereign power is a sentiment not easy to be diffused in this age any further than it is enforced by the direct operation of military means.

Against this doctrine we have set up the American doctrine "That useful and necessary changes in legislation and administration ought to emanate from the free will and intelligent conviction of the people." Tried by this principle, the right of Spain to rule in Cuba must be denied, since it is a fact that a large majority of the people of the island desire independence and the right to rule themselves.

In the light of this fact and of other facts that appeal to our humanity and to our business, commercial, and political interests stands displayed to all the world the duty of America to interfere in the affairs of Cuba and compel Spain to withdraw her army and her civil authority from the island and permit the people thereof to enjoy the inalienable rights of man, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

In attempted refutation of all that has been said of the misgovernment of Cuba and of the cruelty of Spain, the assertion has been made, and is even yet being made, that there exists no real cause of complaint by us against Spain, no cause that can justify us in interfering in the pending conflict in Cuba; that a sensational press has produced, without good reason, the excited condition of the public mind which is demanding that our Government shall take up arms against the Spaniard and expel him from the continent.

This is an attempt to hide from the world the truth of the present situation; it is another of the many attempts that selfish interests have made to excuse the influence of kingly power at the expense of liberty, and to exalt peace in the humiliation of that spirit of freedom which should be ever slow to wrath, indeed, but always swift in vindication of its glorious mission and of its exalted dignity in the affairs of mankind.

As much as any other man I deprecate the sensationalism of the press, which perverts truth and makes a molehill of fact a mountain of falsehood; but the sensationalism of the press has not made Spain, in all her history, vindictive and cruel; a nation productive in wonderful fertility of great men, but of incapable statesmanship and bloody deeds; the nation of the inquisition, of the Duke of Alba, and of General Weyler. The press did not create the facts which have been established irrefutably by the testimony delivered in this presence by the honorable Senators from Vermont, New Hampshire, Nebraska, and Mississippi.

The sensationalism of the press did not compel Weyler to resort to the system of warfare, repugnant to all our ideas, under which hundreds of thousands of inoffensive men, women, and children have been subjected to the horrors of slow death by starvation; under which Ruiz and others were murdered; under which an innocent Cuban maiden was imprisoned and threatened with a fate the anticipation of which created a sentiment of horror in the heart of every man and woman in America.

Was it the sensationalism of the press that prompted a minister of Spain, accredited to this Government, to insult the President of the Republic and that instigated the crime of the destruction of the battle ship *Maine* and the murder of hundreds of her gallant crew? No, no; the press of America has done nothing more in this instance than to hold the mirror up to Spain and show to that nation her own frightfully distorted features and to reflect upon her vision the story of her crimes against God and humanity, crimes the bloodiest in all the annals of time.

Mr. President, the press has told the truth, but not all the truth, concerning affairs in Cuba, because the situation is so full of horrors it can not be overstated, can not, indeed, be adequately stated in all the length and breadth of its appalling horribleness. It has

appeared to me since this discussion has been going on that the press failed to tell the whole truth even as much as we had imagined sometimes that it was telling more than the truth for the purpose of sensation.

Mr. President, in the contemplation of this situation I have been forced to the conclusion that there is but one course that we can pursue with honor. In an effort to alleviate the sufferings of the people of Cuba we have expostulated with Spain and have endeavored to induce her to wage her war of suppression in accordance with the rules of civilized warfare; but our expostulations have been in vain.

She has persisted in her system of inhuman warfare, feebly fighting the insurgents, cruelly starving unarmed men and helpless women and children, insulting and murdering American citizens, and demonstrating in many ways her inability to govern and her determination to listen to nothing but the promptings of a national pride out of which flows a constant stream of misery and death.

Contemplating this condition, I have been forced to the conclusion that we must interfere and put an end to the war of Spain upon the Cubans; that we must do this in the interests of humanity as well as in our own interest.

Sir, to this conclusion the President has come, with many thousands of his fellow-citizens who deprecate the idea of war. He has desired, as every other truly patriotic man has desired, the settlement of the Cuban question by peaceful methods; but he has never been an advocate of the debasing policy of "peace at any price." He knows that peace purchased by dishonorable concessions is debasing and dangerous to popular government; and now, having failed in his laudable efforts to induce Spain to accept the suggestions made by him and to act upon humane principles, he has taken a stand in the interest of the American people and of humanity.

Mr. President, I have no desire for war. It is painful to me to believe that war is imminent, but there seems to be no honorable escape from it. Horrible as war is, yet there are other things worse than war. No honorable-spirited people can afford to sit silently by and see tens and hundreds of thousands of people help-

less and starving to death at the nation's door. It matters not whether they are of our own nation or in a country under the domination of some other.

It is, in my judgment, the duty of this Government to intervene in behalf of such suffering people, whatever may be the consequence to our nation in doing so. It is worse than war in its consequence upon us to permit such a condition of affairs in Cuba to longer continue. To do so is a manifestation of indifference and cowardice and neglect of our plain duty as a Christian people.

It may be said that the President should have proceeded to the patriotic task he has entered upon in some other way than along the lines upon which he proposes to act; that he should have recognized or have recommended the recognition by Congress of the independence of the Republic of Cuba either before or at the same time he asked for an authority to intervene with armed force in the affairs of the island.

In this criticism of the President's action I can not, after serious deliberation, concur.

The recognition of the independence of the Republic of Cuba, unaccompanied by any other act on our part, would not accomplish the purpose we have in view—the immediate relief of the Cuban population from starvation and the horrors of the barbarous system of Spanish warfare. The recognition of the independence of Cuba would not be an act of war against Spain, and it would not be a justifiable cause of war by Spain against the United States. It would leave the situation unrelieved in the only way that will be satisfactory to the people of this country.

Recognition of Cuba's independence without immediate interference would include, of course, the recognition of belligerency and entitle this Government to insist that the war should be conducted in accordance with those humane laws that have been ordained by the common consent of the civilized world. But this action would give to Spain more time in which to oppress the Cubans while conducting a diplomatic controversy with us; more time in which to invoke and procure the moral if not the physical support of the European nations. But, it is said, we might interfere with arms at the very moment we would recognize the independence of the Cuban Republic.

But is this true? Could we, if we recognized the independence of the insurgent government, interpose in our own way with our Army and Navy? Would we not then be compelled to act in any armed action against Spain in Cuba in accordance with the wishes of the Cuban Republic and under its authority? And are we sure that under such conditions we would give effect to the wishes of our own Government in reference to Spain? Would we not, by such action, forego our right to punish Spain in our own way for the wrongs she has done to us as a nation, for her shocking violations of the rules of civilized warfare?

I am not forgetful of the suggestion that has been made, that intervention without recognition of the Cuban republican government creates possibilities of financial complications and conditions respecting the ultimate settlement between Spain and Cuba; but upon reflection I have come to the conclusion that there is no force in this suggestion; that it is unworthy of consideration under the circumstances of the existing crisis. And this leads me to repeat what I have said elsewhere in reference to possible financial speculations, viz, that any man, whether a member of Congress or otherwise, who would attempt to make a dollar out of such a crisis is too mean to live. Men who attempt to speculate on the calamities of the poor Cubans or on the blowing up of the *Maine* ought to be shot.

It therefore seems to me that intervention as suggested by the President—intervention without recognition—is the wisest policy, being the policy under which we can act without delay and without the danger of embarrassing complications with the insurgent authorities.

But I desire to say, Mr. President, that when the time comes, after Spanish rule is driven from that island and after the Cuban patriots have been freed from their domination, I hope the President of the United States, through any agency he may desire, upon looking over that country, may find out what the proper government ought to be, and if those gallant patriots who have been making the fight for liberty have a government there such as ought to be allowed to stand, that he will recognize it immediately after the war shall have been over.

But intervention is the policy under which we may now say to Spain, "You have outraged human nature; you are endangering

the peace of the world; you have shown yourself in the government of Cuba to be incapable both in peace and in war; you have insulted this Government, have robbed, imprisoned, and murdered our citizens, and have destroyed great interests of the people of the United States, and now you must withdraw your armies and your civil officers from Cuba so that peace may be made enduring in the island and the people's rights be no longer outraged by tyranny and misgovernment."

The only question, then, that remains is, Have we the right to intervene under international law? This right in us, under existing conditions, I have no doubt exists.

In the report made by the honorable chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, which is one of the ablest reports ever made to the Senate, in my judgment, I find quotations which have already been read to the Senate, but I shall take occasion to read them again. I shall refer to only a part of what appears in the report.

Arntz, a writer on international law, maintains that the right of intervention exists, to copy from the report of the Committee on Foreign Relations:

1. When the institutions of one state violate or threaten to violate the rights of another state, or when such violation is the necessary consequence of its institutions and the impossibility of an orderly coexistence of states results therefrom.

2. When a government, acting entirely within the limits of its prerogatives of sovereignty, violates the rights of humanity, whether by measures contrary to the interests of other states or by excessive injustice and cruelty which deeply wounds public morals and civilization.

The right of intervention—

Continues Arntz—

is a legitimate one, because however important may be the rights of sovereignty and independence, there is one thing of still greater importance, and that is the law of humanity and human society, which ought not to be outraged.

Mr. President, it seems to me that we can place the right to intervene upon that last sentence, written by the law writer Arntz, that the law of humanity and human society has been outraged by the course pursued by the Spanish army and the Spanish Government in starving to death the hundreds and thousands of poor noncombatants—old men, women, and children.

Without elaborating further the argument that we have a right to intervene, I may call attention to the fact that both President

Cleveland and President McKinley have warned Spain that the time might come when, in the language of President McKinley in his message of December 6, 1897—

If it shall hereafter appear to be a duty, imposed by our obligations to ourselves, to civilization and humanity, to intervene with force, it shall be without fault on our part and only because the necessity for such action will be so clear as to command the support and approval of the civilized world.

Mr. President, the time has come when without fault on our part we must intervene in the affairs of Cuba, and that the President may be enabled to do so, he should be directed and empowered to use the entire land and naval forces of the United States.

Let us not hesitate to give to him that authority, and let us give it to him in the confident belief that even now is the day and the hour in which this Government, that was consolidated by the statesmanship of Washington and saved from destruction by the patriotism and wisdom of Lincoln, speaking by the voice of McKinley, shall demand the retirement of Spain from Cuba; and upon her refusal to comply the Republic will thunder this demand from the mouths of a thousand cannons.

Mr. President, I esteem it an honor that I am able to-day to say that I join in the support of the announced policy of President McKinley. I do not care whether he has dotted every "i" or crossed every "t" in his proclamation to the world; everybody knows that he has said plainly enough to Spain, and every American echoes the words, that the Government of Spain shall at once relinquish its authority and government on the Island of Cuba.

After the vote is taken upon the report of the Committee on Foreign Relations, there will be but one mind and one voice in the United States.

However much my friends may hesitate and doubt as to the unimportant phrasing of the announcement, nobody on earth, not even Spain, will misconstrue or misunderstand our plain demand.

Mr. President, the greatest criminal trial of modern times is approaching a conclusion. The people of the entire world have been witnesses upon this trial. The indictment against the offender has been proclaimed to every land and has been read in every language.

The Kingdom of Spain has been the first and only nation to merit a reputation so awful in character or to achieve a place in

history so completely unparalleled in infamy and wrong. The evidence has been given, and the inquest of the world is now sitting in solemn consideration of that evidence.

The announcement of the verdict is awaited with expectation by every country upon the earth. No other nation in many hundreds of years has been evicted arbitrarily from its holdings and driven into the complete and perfect disgrace of universal ostracism. The punishment is great; God knows that the crime was greater. The humiliation and the bitter disgrace of the fall of a nation which once owned nine-tenths of the great American continent are stupendous and terrific, even in contemplation, but that humiliation and disgrace, complete and awful as they are, do not in even a minute degree compare with the offenses and enormities chargeable against the Government of Spain.

The history of Spain is a history of more than a thousand years of concentrated cruelty. It is a history so extensive and continuous, made up of every conceivable variety of barbaric wrong and outrage, too often instituted by the direct authority of the Government itself, and the identity known to the world as the Kingdom of Spain is now justly and properly recognized as an "out-law among nations."

It has always been a robber nation. It has always been the merciless appropriator of the property of others. While enjoying the honor of the discovery of America, she appropriated the countries, the islands, and the waters, spied out by that intrepid Italian navigator who commanded her ships and who first set his foot upon San Salvador.

The reward he received from Spain was precisely in kind and keeping with the reward Spain has always given to those who have performed meritorious services for her. He was imprisoned and punished, humiliated and degraded for the offense of adding to the Spanish domain the wondrous territory of the New World. All this territory which was formerly by virtue of discovery and occupation known as Spanish America, has become the home of political freemen, forever emancipated from the narrow and miserable control of a country which governed only by the sword, whose watchword was blood and whose inspiration was death.

From the fertile plains of Argentina far across the River Plata, from the heights of the Andes to the lowlands of the Amazon,



from Yucatan to San Francisco, all the valleys and the mountains of Central America and over the entire country of Mexico, through the beautiful glades of Florida, the plains of Texas, almost the whole of the valleys of the Mississippi, the Missouri, and the Yellowstone, the golden sands of the Sacramento, and the rugged mountain sides of the Columbia, all this vast and magnificent estate, now the home of twenty independent countries, was once by and through the genius and perseverance of Columbus, the property of Spain. And for all this Columbus received only chains and a prison cell.

And so, forward to the present day. So from 1492 to 1898, the story of Spanish inhumanity is just as true in the nineteenth century as it was in the days of the Inquisition. In Cuba, its ultimatum as held out to the reconcentrados has been simply the alternative of death by starvation or death by the machete. Human life in the Spanish lexicon is a thing of no value. General Weyler started out two years ago with what he termed a policy of pacification. He told his sovereign that in such and such a period he would pacify the insurgent provinces of Cuba.

How did he pacify them? He penned those poor noncombatant women, children, and old men up in barbed-wire inclosures and surrounded them by deep trenches and canals, where they could easily be pacified by the machete. Two hundred thousand Cubans of both sexes and of all ages sleep the sleep of pacification in their graves upon the soil once owned by them. The United States has waited with an awful waiting until by such methods Spain could pacify a people. If an American citizen was charged by mere suspicion with anything whatever, he was locked up in vile prison cells and held *incomunicado* for such unlimited time as his captors chose.

Thanks to the unwavering sense of justice of the people of the United States, the murderers and the outlaws who now exercise a brief show of authority in Cuba will soon become *incomunicado* until justice shall be satisfied and the avenging angel shall write the verdict and sentence of the offended world. And if the people of this country shall do nothing more in this century than drive the Spaniards from this country, we as a people shall earn the praises of every lover of freedom and humanity the world over.